



2021.22 Training

Subject: Change Marital Status? | Talking Points

Did you get married?

If you got married this year, congratulations! In terms of taxes, marriage means big changes. First, your filing status has changed, and you now have the option of filing jointly with your spouse. Filing a joint return means you can claim the new, almost-doubled standard deduction, worth \$24,000 for couples whose status is Married Filing Jointly.

If you and your spouse decide to file separate returns, you must itemize deductions if your spouse does so on their return. Also, you cannot claim the following tax benefits if you've filed separately:

- Student loan interest
- Education credits
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Premium Tax Credit
- Child and Dependent Care Expenses

Divorce

Getting divorced means, you'll need to change your filing status. However, your marital status on your tax return is dictated by your marital status on December 31 of the tax year. So if you and your partner split up or separate, but you're not divorced, or legally separated according to state law, by the end of the year, your status is still "married," and you and your spouse have the option of filing as Married Filing Jointly or Married Filing Separately.

You may be able to deduct any alimony you pay if your agreement was entered into prior to January 1, 2019. Any agreements updated after December 31, 2018 will also disallow the alimony deduction. Alimony payments must be included in a divorce agreement, be paid in cash, and must end with death or remarriage.